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### SB40-20/21: Resolution to Adjust Graduate Teaching and Research Assistanship Pay to Market Rate

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**The Associated Students of the University of Montana**  
**Resolution to Adjust Graduate Teaching and Research Assistantship Pay to Market Rate**  
**October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**SB 40-20/21**

**Authored by: Grayson O'Reilly, GPSA Executive Team Member; Mariah McIntosh,**  
**Graduate Council Student Representative;**  
**Sponsored by: Char Gatlin, ASUM Senator;**

Whereas, Graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants (RAs) at the University of Montana (UM) currently earn a base salary that is lower than in any other state in the United States (US) and has not increased (at the Master's level) over the last 25 years;

Whereas, Unlike many US universities, UM currently does not cover the costs of student fees (ca. \$2,000/yr) or healthcare (ca. \$4,750/yr) in TA stipends and does not require these costs to be paid as part of RA stipends;

Whereas, These costs effectively reduce base-funded TA and RA annual salaries to \$2,250 (\$2.68/hr) for Master's and \$8,050 (\$9.58/hr) for Doctoral students;

Whereas, Current TA/RA salaries are well below the cost of living in Missoula and, when adjusted for healthcare costs and fees, for Master's students, well below the Montana state and federal minimum wage;

Whereas, The UM Faculty Senate unanimously passed a Resolution on April 23, 2020 to: 1) increase TA and RA salaries to the national average of \$21,000 for Doctoral students and 80% of this national average for Master's students, 2) provide regular cost of living salary increases to TA and base-funded RA salaries on the same schedule as faculty and staff, and 3) have UM cover the costs of all student fees and health insurance;

Whereas, The UM Graduate and Professional Student Association has also endorsed this ask to the UM administration;

Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, That the Associated Students of the University of Montana respectfully ask the University of Montana to immediately commit to:

- (1) *Providing an immediate cost of living adjustment to TA and base-funded RA salaries that is commensurate to the adjustment being provided this year to faculty and staff;*
- (2) *Providing a salary increase of \$3,000 for TAs and base-funded RAs for AY21-22;*
- (3) *Providing annual increases in salary of not less than \$1,000 such that by AY2026-27 UM TA and base-funded RAs are consistent with the national average:*
  - MS/MA annual (2-semester) salary of \$18,500 (\$9,500 increase above current) + cost of living adjustments;*
  - PhD annual (2-semester) salary of \$23,000 (\$8,200 increase above current) + cost of living adjustments;*

(4) *Providing a progressive plan as to how the University will address high graduate student fees and healthcare costs within the next 5 years;*

Therefore, Let It Be Further Resolved, That this resolution be sent to Seth Bodnar, President of the University of Montana; Reed Humphrey, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President; Paul Lassiter, Vice President for Operations and Finance; Scott Whittenburg, Dean of the Graduate School; and Ashby Kinch, Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Passed by Committee: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

Passed by ASUM Senate: October 21, 2020

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Noah Durnell,  
Chair of the Relations and Affairs Committee

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Patrick James Flanagan,  
Chair of the Senate